



**Job Search 2.0:
Where Web 2.0, Libraries & the Great Job Search Collide
Issues and Opportunities for MLIS Graduates**

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Meeting:

97 — New Professionals beyond New Professionals - skills, needs and strategies of a new generation of LIS professionals — New Professionals Special Interest Group

Abstract:

The most immediate need facing recent and soon to be graduates of Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programs is the need for employment. This paper examines ways in which Web 2.0 will impact the job search process for this population. It explores social networking and social media, and how they collude in a process known as Job Search 2.0. Observing both active and passive forces, the paper discusses how Job Search 2.0 can both help and hurt MLIS graduate job seekers. Observations are made regarding the impact on graduates who select not to participate in Job Search 2.0. Ways libraries, Library 2.0 technologies and patrons are impacted by Job Search 2.0 are also examined. Appendices offer advice concerning joining a social network, establishing an attractive online reputation and best practices in Job Search 2.0.

Introduction

Web 2.0 and social media applications are finding increasing relevance in our lives. Although use of social media is most often viewed as a personal endeavor, with rising popularity, it's become a notable force in the professional world as well. Bringing technology in communion with the concepts of social networking, social media technologies have become a prime player in many professional arenas. Not only are they employed by companies and institutions desiring to leverage their strengths, but by individuals who want to display their own strengths to those companies and institutions. As such, social media have become an important element of the job search process.

This paper explores the rich and developing relationship between social media and job searching, and how it impacts our libraries. In order to do so, the audience is defined as students and recent graduates of Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS)

programs. Focusing on this audience, the paper explores how MLIS graduates, like other budding professionals, can effectively use social media to discover and secure their first professional position, and what that experience means for libraries and patrons. It will examine both good and ill effects social media engagement has on the job search process, as well as what non-engagement can portend. Finally, as appendices, it will offer advice for MLIS graduates on how to thoughtfully and effectively engage social media for professional purposes.

The Socialites at the Center of the Phenomenon: Social Networking & Social Media

Social Networking

Social networking is a broad field of study which examines relationships among actors. Distinguishing itself from traditional human behavior perspectives which focus on individual actors in isolation, social networking concerns our connections to others and how they impact our behavior and our lives (Brass, Galaskiewics, Greve, & Tsai, 2004).

Looking at social networking in the context of a job search, we can define it as “individual actions directed towards contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred for the main purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job” (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000, p.492). Popular job search advice, offered by counselors, books and familiars alike, suggests that job seekers, including recent graduates, should contact people within their social networks for information concerning available jobs (van Hoyer, van Hooft, & Lievens, 2009). Those who are not close to professionals in their field of interest need not fear, either: according to Granovetter (1973), even weak ties are powerful in the world of social networking.

Granovetter (1973), in a groundbreaking study concerning social networks and their utility, revealed that having weak ties to people who move in circles outside our own is highly productive. This is because weak ties are able to provide us with information different from that which we already receive within in our own circles. Still influential, Granovetter’s “strength-of-weak-ties” proposition finds new meaning in the context of a job search—contrary to popular belief, you don’t need to know one to be one. You just have to find a social connection to one.

Beyond theory, social networking is a valuable element of the job search process. Effective social networking “is likely to produce more different job leads and more information about these job leads, enabling job seekers to submit more and presumably more informed applications and thus increasing their chances of receiving more job offers and finding employment” (van Hoyer et al., 2009, p.666). But how can MLIS graduates effectively employ social networking skills to find a job in today’s world?

Social Media

The internet is changing how we view, experience, live and relate to one another. As Carr (2009) explains:

We are coming to live inside the World Wide Computer. It's becoming the default forum for many of our commercial and personal relationships, the medium of choice for storing and exchanging information in all its forms, the preferred means of entertaining, informing, and expressing ourselves. For growing numbers of us, in fact, the virtual is becoming as real as the physical (p.124).

One reason we have begun to engage more heavily with the internet is that the internet has come to engage more with us. A unidirectional relationship based on consumption has become a multi-faceted relationship based on creation and sharing. We're now living in a Web 2.0 world.

Web 2.0 represents a dramatic change in the way we use the internet. We're no longer isolated actors passively using the internet, but members of a collaborative community, creating, sharing and interacting with one another in exciting ways. We can come together via social media activities such as blogging, livecasting, location-based networking, social bookmarking, wiki building, and other ever-expanding offerings. At the heart of this interactivity is creation.

In order to be a part of Web 2.0 and social media applications, a person must first create—whether it is completing an online profile, publishing a comment, writing a blog post or posting a picture. Thanks to the “democratizing power of digital technologies,” creation and publication are more accessible than ever before (Anderson, 2006, p.74). Instead of being confined by the rules of scarcity that defined media of yesteryear (Anderson, 2006), Web 2.0 is defined by “the mass amateurization of publishing and a switch from ‘Why publish this?’ to ‘Why not?’” (Shirky, 2009, p.60). In turn, “people create for a variety of...reasons—expression, fun, experimentation, and so on” (Anderson, 2006, p.74). With rising popularity, that “so on” is the job search.

Where the Socialites Meet: The Job Search

Research on social networking while job searching is scarce, and most that exists offers little more than theoretical extrapolation (van Hove et al., 2009). Tellingly, as recently as 2009, social networking was regarded as a specific job search behavior, unrelated to job search behaviors that concerned print advertising, the internet and public employment services (van Hove et al., 2009). With the advent of Web 2.0, the era of seeing social networking and the internet as distinct entities has ended. Welcome to Job Search 2.0.

In the 21st century, as the United States faces its worst economic downturn since the Great Depression and unemployment rates continue to rise, it's going to take more than an impressive resume and a diploma to land a job. It's going to take networking. The quickest, easiest and most popular way to network today is via social media. Although social media is usually seen as something we employ at leisure in our personal lives, it's becoming increasingly relevant in our professional lives. Employing social media during the job search has become a key way people of all ages, including recent graduates, discover, learn about, apply for and win job opportunities (Kohnle, 2009).

By connecting users to one another, social media creates instant social networks. Social networks, in turn, provide opportunities to share, exchange and discuss information, including information concerning employment opportunities. Beyond the strong ties we have to family, friends and current coworkers in everyday life, the weak ties formed via social media interactivity can “operate as a bridge between densely interconnected social cliques and therefore provide a source of unique information and resources” to job seekers who employ them (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001, p.6).

Web 2.0 and social media applications have the potential to dramatically alter the experience of job searching. For many businesses, institutions and individuals, it already has. Even those who opt out of social media activity may find that their job search is impacted by it, not only in terms of the competition, but in terms of how they are seen by potential employers. As such, in a world of Web 2.0, “we are all on notice”—just as social media can add to our job search, so social media can take away from it (Zittrain, 2008, p.211).

Where the Social Ones Meet the Seeking Ones

Students who have recently graduated or are soon approaching graduation from Masters of Library and Information Science programs would do well to consider the role of social media in their job search. Participation or non-participation in social media could significantly impact their job search process—vitaly, it could define the success of their job search.

To fully explore social media’s impact on MLIS graduates’ job search process, we will examine both the passive and active elements of Job Search 2.0. This paper defines passive social media impact as that which is done onto the job seeker, as executed by recruiters and potential employers, while active social media impact is that over which MLIS students have control (although not complete)—namely, their own social media presence as defined by participation in Web 2.0.

Whether already engaged in social media undertakings or not, there are elements of Job Search 2.0 all MLIS graduates should consider. This information is not meant to persuade or dissuade social media involvement, but to inform it and guarantee that where it *is* used, it’s used wisely. As Shirky (2009) aptly states in his book *Here Comes Everybody*, “people with more at stake are making more of these [social media] tools” (p.171)—and who has more at stake than recent MLIS graduates in need of employment?

The Passive Side of Job Search 2.0

Individuals, whether job seeking or not, aren’t the only ones engaging in social media these days. “Gone are the days of recommendations to keep social media usage out of the enterprise” proclaims a recent report (ISACA, 2010, p.4). For many businesses, institutions and agencies, “social media use is no longer the exception, but rather the rule” (ISACA, 2010, p.4). Even if not undertaken as a larger social media strategy, potential employers, including those most likely to hire MLIS graduates, are using Web 2.0 to search for, learn about, reach out to and evaluate potential employees.

Although job boards and traditional job marketing are not likely to disappear overnight, there's a strong trend toward job recruitment via social media outlets (Ronn, 2007). Many employers want to attract applicants for vacancies by word-of-mouth, and have found that social networking is optimal for this targeted form of job advertising (van Hoye et al., 2009). Further, employers are using social media to find very specific candidates for positions, as they leverage the likeness of online communities—displayed in similar demographics, backgrounds, educational achievements, interests and expertise—in order to find perfect fits for their vacancies (Ronn, 2007). Employers don't just prowl social media networks to find new candidates for jobs; they also prowl them to eliminate existing ones (LaGessee, 2009).

Employers know that it's risky to judge a candidate's fit for a vacancy based on her/his resume alone—today's employers require a broader picture to find the right employee for the job (Huang, Hung, & Hsu, 2008, p.1). Even before the interview process, employers can, and increasingly do, conduct a quick and dirty background check on applicants, looking to social media for insights into the person behind the resume (Ronn, 2007). This is as true in the library world as anywhere else. My experience in the Twin Cities library circuit confirms this.

Speaking with area librarians, representing two academic, two special and two public libraries, as well as one school media program, all confirmed that social media is an important element of their hiring process (personal communications, October 18-27, 2010). One librarian, representing a special library, explained that a systematic check of all major social media outlets is made on each and every candidate prior to calling them for an interview (personal communication, October 27, 2010). "The resume is just step one," she said, "Then the real exploration begins, and it begins with Facebook." Four of the librarians specifically mentioned that their institution's Human Resources departments also actively use social media as means to collect further information on applicants, including checking on references and fact-checking claims made on resumes. And this all takes place before an interview is even offered!

Considering all that can happen in the job search without us even knowing (passive), we must seriously consider how to actively control our social media presence.

The Active Side of Job Search 2.0

Before delving into the active side of Job Search 2.0, a brief exploration of relevant social media applications is prudent. These applications are of high interest to MLIS graduates because of their broad popularity and the ability to specify communities of interest within them.

LinkedIn – A social media application based specifically on professional networking. It emphasizes mutually beneficial relationships between employers, employees and those looking to enter the field. Well-regarded across industries, this site is often seen as the preeminent Job Search 2.0 application.

Facebook – Although it has encountered frequent problems with privacy, this social networking site still retains a steady and growing user-base. Not restricted to professional use, this site offers a variety of ways to stay in touch with people in one’s network, including updates, wall messages, pictures, videos and even throwing sheep.

Twitter – A microblogging site that is currently skyrocketing in popularity in the world of Job Search 2.0. Quick, concise, frequently posted and easy to share tweets are the driving force of the Twitter machine. Here, participants can Tweet, re-Tweet and Hootsuite their way to a new job.

Blogs – If it can be dreamed, it can be blogged. Blogs, or web logs, can be created on any number of blog hosting sites on any topic imaginable. Professional blogs display original content, personal experience, subject matter expertise, and character. Blogs are good for people who want to share longer messages, anecdotes and/or opinions than other social media outlets allow.

YouTube – Non-traditional job seekers can use YouTube to share video resumes with potential employers, or display their expertise by sharing videos of them presenting at conferences, giving a talk to a class, or offering a tutorial on profession-related activities.

If, how and to what degree these social media applications are engaged during the job search process is up to the MLIS graduate. The degree to which she/he exercises caution and experiences success using these applications is also her/his own responsibility. Addressing MLIS graduates directly, this paper will discuss how social media can both hurt and help the job search process.

What Hurts

Carr (2009), looking at historical revolutions in technology, warns that “optimism is a natural response to the arrival of a powerful and mysterious new technology, it can blind us to more troubling portents” (p.125). The threats inherent in Job Search 2.0 confirm this.

The harmful element of social media in the MLIS graduate’s Job Search 2.0 is two-sided: a potential employer can see either too little or too much of you as an applicant. As well, there are individuals poised and ready to take advantage of your job hunting escapades.

Too Little

People establish profiles on social media sites for a variety of reasons, namely to obtain services. Sites for photo hosting, magazine subscriptions, coupon mailings and job search sites alike ask for basic contact information, birth-date, employment information and interests. This information makes individuals searchable, but not dynamic. When undertaken with little seriousness or thought to employment ramifications, the flat persona

built online by haphazard sign-ups can portray an unattractive candidate that lacks dimension to a searching potential employer. Having no online presence, something which is growing increasingly difficult to maintain, could be just as damaging. Having too much fodder for the search can be negative, as well.

Too Much

Shirky (2009) explains that "[T]he ways in which the information we give off about ourselves, in photos and e-mails and MySpace pages and all the rest of it, has dramatically increased our social visibility and made it easier for us to find each other but also to be scrutinized in public" (p.11). Perhaps the most obvious concern in the world of Job Search 2.0 is the threat of sharing too much about oneself with a potential employer, whether intentional or not. Going beyond the common-sense non-disclosure of political views, illicit acts, religious orientations, non-decorous behaviors and relationship status, there are other concerns as well.

A white paper published by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Madden, Fox, Smith, & Vitak, 2007) reported cautionary facts about our online presence and corresponding reputations:

- *We are knowable*: "...the more content we contribute voluntarily to the public or semi-public corners of the Web, the more we are not only findable, but also knowable" (p.2).
- *We thought "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas."* *Little did we know...*: "Unlike footprints left in the sand at the beach, our online data trails often stick around long after the tide has gone out" (p.2).
- *We don't even know*: "Most internet users are not concerned about the amount of information available about them online, and most do not take steps to limit that information" (p.38).

Taken together, these three facts paint a startling picture of how our online reputations today can be determined by evidence of poor decision making in the past and general negligence concerning the amount and kind of information we make available online. As Jonathan Zittrain (2008) explains it, social media has made surveillance by government, corporations and other intermediaries unnecessary—our social networks *are* the new surveillance. "The presence of documentary evidence not only makes such [unflattering] incidents reviewable by the public at large, but...also creates the possibility of getting fired or disciplined where there had not been one before" (Zittrain, 2009, 211). For the job seeker, discipline comes in the form of losing job opportunities.

Outsider Interference

Just as it is in real life, sometimes people on social networking sites don't have your best interests in mind. A harmful, albeit less often experienced, effect of Job Search 2.0, is the opportunity for attack from others.

On many social media applications, you can control what you say about yourself, but can't control what others say about you. As a result, sometimes your reputation is left to the whim of outside parties and you with little recourse for righting it. There is also opportunity to misuse applicants' desire for a job for malfeasant ends. As profiled in a recent article of *Time*, "Job-search scams," con artists have learned to utilize social media job searching applications to target victims, eliciting and abusing information provided by eager job applicants (Kiviat, 2009). And anytime you put information out on the internet, you are opening yourself up to being known by parties you yourself cannot effectively track.

Thankfully, the hurt of social media can be mitigated when Job Search 2.0 is strategically employed.

What Helps

For the job-seeking MLIS graduate, Job Search 2.0 offers three significant advantages: what you know, who you know and how you are known.

What You Know

Social media are a great advantage when approaching the job search, as they present MLIS graduate students with unique ways to learn, share, connect with and contribute to the professional body they want to be a part of. With few exceptions, social media applications are free to join and offer students and graduates cost effective, up-to-date and interactive means of learning about the MLIS field, including current trends, language, big players and controversies therein.

Participating in social media, especially in a professional fashion, gives job applicants a tech-savvy edge that will stand out in the application process. As more and more libraries are adopting Web 2.0 and social media opportunities for Library 2.0 services, these skills are becoming more and more valued and oft required by employing institutions. By following and "friending" Library 2.0 applications, you as a job seeker can gain valuable insight into specific institutions and agencies that you would like to apply to and work for. While gaining intimate knowledge of inner-library workings and community relations via social media, you may also gain a valuable lead in the applicant pool. So can who you know.

Who You Know

As a writer for *Business Week Online* succinctly states, "It has always been about who you know; now you can know a lot more people" (Ronn, 2007). Job Search 2.0 is dramatically different than the presumably named Job Search 1.0, because it allows us to network far more broadly than ever before. As a result, MLIS graduates are able to make and maintain vast social networks—and to do so at the click of a mouse.

Networking via social media allows MLIS graduates to stay in contact with people from the past, while building relationships that will help them move into the future. Previous employers, coworkers, former educators, and others can share job search advice,

offer job leads, serve as references and provide insight into the field from either an insider or outsider perspective. When thoughtfully engaged, social media can also connect us, both directly and indirectly, with potential employers and those who have information about them. Further, these varying people can connect with one another: positive feedback, testimonials and personality references offered by past and present people in your network may be the key to a new job (Huang et al., 2008).

“It is remarkable how people will help each other, share information directly, or otherwise post it for people they scarcely know or don’t know” (LaGessee, 2009). Like social media itself, that generosity is not a one-way street. If you want references, job insights and leads from others in your network, make sure that you are passing on the like.

And don’t forget the “strength-of-weak-ties” proposition: Even if someone isn’t positioned to offer you a job at this time doesn’t mean they aren’t worth adding to your network. They may prove your richest source of original information during the job search, according to Granovetter (1973) and Siebert (2001)—and original information is key when many are battling for the same library job.

How You Are Known

Importantly, and oft ignored, MLIS graduates can engage social media before, during and after the job search to create a solid online reputation. This is important, especially during the job search process as “People who can demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of a particular industry, or whose name appears when a web search is conducted, are more likely than not to be noticed first” (Kohnle, 2009).

If you foster a healthy, robust online reputation, you’ll be noticed by others in the field, including peers and possible employers. By positioning yourself as a subject matter expert, achieved through focused contribution to a particular field (e.g. deep cataloging, information technology in libraries, open source software applications, dark archives, etc.), you will not only be recognized more widely in that field, but in general searches of your name (e.g. Google searches). In this way, social media greatly enhances an MLIS graduate’s ability to identify, modify, display and even sell themselves as a brand and as a recognizable commodity for potential employers.

But what of those who are not active in social media. How does Job Search 2.0 impact them?

Non-participants

MLIS graduates may self-select not to participate in social media, regardless of their job search needs. As Zittrain (2008) notes, “There are both significant costs and benefits inherent in expanding the use of our public selves into more facets of daily life” (p.213). Because benefits of being visible on the internet can be both harmful and helpful to a job seeker’s efforts, maybe it is best to abstain from social media and Job Search 2.0 altogether

(Roy, Bolfig, & Brzozowski, 2010)? Whether or not opting out of social media helps or hurts the job search has not yet been examined; however, some basic observations can be made.

Whether or not you're active in social media at the time of your job search, chances are good that you'll be passively engaged by them when potential employers search your name online. What they find may be slim, but even that can speak volumes to your fit for a job. When a name search turns up few and possibly cryptic results, assumptions made by searching employers could be as benign as deciding you as a future employee won't fritter away work time with social media, or as hurtful as assuming you don't have the technological and social skills necessary to be active in such communities. Either way, leaving too much to an employer's imagination may leave them feeling uninspired.

Developing theories in social media contend that an individual can be effectively profiled based on various aspects of their social media identity, namely upon observations of an individual's production and consumption thereof (Huang et al., 2008, p.1). When you have little to no presence online, your social media identity, and, as a result, your reputation, lie in the hands of others. Chances are good that you would not let someone else interview for a job in your stead—why would you allow someone to commit the equivalent online?

When you opt out of social media, you opt out of building a positive persona online that people can network with, relate to and imagine working with in the future. As well, you instantly forgo the richness of social networking opportunities available via social media involvement. When knowing people is the game, it's dangerous to rely on your rolodex.

It's notable that even the decision to *not* participate in Job Search 2.0 efforts is fraught with positives and negatives. During the job search, MLIS graduates have to decide where the greatest benefit lies for them—alongside or apart from social media.

Where Job Search 2.0 Meets Library 2.0

With luck, an MLIS graduate's job search, whether 1.0 or 2.0 in nature, will end well when she/he secures a position within a library. The relevancy and exercise of skills developed while job searching will not come to an end when the job search does, however—rather, they will find new meaning within the institution lucky enough to hire her/him.

Job Search 2.0 skills not only determine who is employed at a library, but how that library will employ Web 2.0, Library 2.0 and Job 2.0 opportunities. New employees who enter libraries with advanced Web 2.0 skills are equipped with the skills to engage Library 2.0 applications within their institutions, to continue growing along with the profession through ongoing participation, and to share those skills with others. Not only do supervisors and coworkers benefit from learning social media skills, but so do patrons.

In the midst of a nationwide recession, libraries, especially public libraries, are serving as frontline service providers for job seekers in the community (Levine, 2010). Beyond instructing job seekers how to search for jobs online, complete resumes and online

applications, and set up e-mail accounts, MLIS graduates who have utilized Job Search 2.0 applications can share their rich knowledge of this growing field. In a recent article by Roy, Bolfing and Brzozowski (2010), a class titled “Social Networking and Managing Your Online Identity” was integrated into a mini course on job hunting to rave reviews. Especially when libraries and patrons alike are financially strapped, the creativity and opportunity inherent in the various 2.0 applications hold great promise for continued relevancy and purpose.

Conclusion

In general, research on social networking as a job search behavior has been scarce to date (van Hoyer, van Hooft, & Lievens, 2009). However, as it has naturally found a thriving life within social media applications, Job Search 2.0 has emerged and drawn new attention to this phenomenon.

Current and soon-to-be graduates of Masters of Library and Information Science programs must consider both the harm and the help inherent in this new interactive form of job searching. Noting both passive and active engagement in Job Search 2.0, MLIS graduates can leverage these emerging technologies as an important aspect of their job search.

Whether a graduate chooses to engage or not engage in Job Search 2.0 activities is a personal decision—but it’s one that could have very real professional ramifications. While mitigating the possible negative effects of maintaining an internet reputation may prove difficult, the benefits to be gained via social networking, learning about the field, and creating your own unique identity therein may provide a compelling case to be an active member in social media. Wise job seekers will not rely solely on social media in order to secure a job; they will successfully integrate these emerging technologies into a broader, holistic job search strategy. Once employed, these MLIS graduates can integrate Web 2.0, Library 2.0 and Job Search 2.0 into their new work to the benefit of their employer, their institution, their patrons and their continuously developing professional self.

For MLIS graduates, social media engagement is not a job search panacea, but a resourceful, innovative way to enhance an already strategic job search. Rather than sitting at home waiting for a call, those who engage in Job Search 2.0 will be positively positioning themselves for success in both finding a job and in the LIS career at large.

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Appendix A

Advice on Joining a Social Network

If you have decided that you are ready to join a social media network, especially if doing so for professional purposes, the following advice will help you begin.

1. Identify a social media application that you are comfortable joining.

Like a good librarian-to-be, you should do research before settling on a social media application to join—especially if it’s your first time to do so. Beyond reading “About Us” pages on various sites, consider lurking awhile. No, not in a creepy way—in a productively curious way. Surmise the application’s character, the prevailing themes discussed, who else is participating and how you can contribute to the conversation. Remember that joining an application just because it’s popular may not be the most productive route to take—consider how each application and the groups present thereon will serve you as a budding professional. If you’re having a difficult time identifying an application that seems to “fit” you, consider exploring the formal networks and social media offerings of professional associations such as ALA, MLA, IFLA, etc. There’s a wealth of options now that everyone is jumping on the Web/Library 2.0 wagon, and that may prove your greatest asset in Job Search 2.0!

2. Get Personal—with the application, that is.

Learn the ins and outs of the social media application you have chosen to join. What are the privacy settings and how are they controlled? Find out who sees your messages, when and how. Learn how to fully, but still comfortably, engage in the site—make sure that you are taking away from it as much as possible. Note how much control you have over the material you create and contribute, and whether or not you can delete, expand or redact it as necessary. And what if someone says something about you or tries to misconstrue your contributions? What then? These are all good questions you should answer before engaging in the application. As always, make note of your password, how to access your information (profile, identifying information, etc.) and how you can remove yourself from the application at a future date.

3. Find a clique [or is that a click?] to call home.

Browse the application’s groups, networks and subfields to determine which areas best fit your professional needs. Large social media applications, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, offer copious amounts of specification in community engagement. Make sure that you find a community that will enhance your job search, and which you can contribute to as well. It may take a while to find the perfect fit, so feel free to flirt with a few options, and consider becoming active across more than one.

4. Build your profile carefully and assume that it will be publicly displayed.

Consider this your cover letter: Be thorough (within reason of safety, of course), be accurate, be professional and utilize action words and phrases that relate to your profession of choice. Make sure that you express genuine interest and experience

(where you have it) in your field. Profiles are searchable on most applications, and recruiters/employers will look at them just like they do a cover letter: when words pop, they draw attention.

5. Start connecting!

Congratulations! You have now become a part of an active, thriving, connected and creative community—indulge! If you want to start in a safe zone, start by connecting to current acquaintances. With time, push yourself to connect to those outside of your current circle, those “weak ties” that will provide you new, valuable insights into job opportunities and your field at large. Welcome to Job Search 2.0!

Advice on establishing a healthy, attractive online reputation

1. Be proactive.

Everything you contribute to Web 2.0 and the social media applications you participate in come together to create a profile of who you are as a person—forming an online reputation. Don't forget that the internet has a long memory, and that you have to answer to the image you have constructed via this medium. Be proactive and tend the image that you are putting out there—be mindful, be strategic and be a conscientious contributor to any and all applications you are a part of.

2. Watch yourself!

One easy way to keep your finger on the pulse of your online reputation is to create a simple ping search of your own name. Choose a popular browser, such as Google, and create a feed that will notify you whenever something new appears on the net with your name on it. This small but significant act will help you stay on top of the information, material and news that others will find when they search your name. And knowing is half the battle.

3. Be an active acquaintance.

Make sure that you are engaging with your social media applications and the communities they host. Share content, comment on other users' posts, ask questions and get interactive. By contributing to these environments in reputable ways, you will be known and appreciated by the other members therein, and search results related to your name will be robust and flattering. And, as many social media communities function on a "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine" ethic, the more you give, the more you will receive in return.

4. Link, link, link all the way home.

If you're active across multiple social media applications, share your involvement far and wide. Offer others ample opportunity to move around your material on various applications and make sure you keep on drawing people to your most valuable assets. This will provide a broader view of you as a person, and permit you to exercise and show off all sorts of social media muscles.

5. Be aware of your surroundings.

Make sure that you do not grow too comfortable in your social media lifestyle. Take time at least once every three months to examine your presence on each of the applications you belong to.

- As social media changes often, make sure that you are checking on current privacy settings offered thereon and how to properly employ them.
- Categorize your contacts when possible, to ensure that you are tracking who you know, how you know them, and why you are connected to them. Using category settings well will also help you control who can see what portions of your profile and activity, which is important where your reputation and privacy are concerned.

- Whilst checking and categorizing your list, consider pruning those contacts that are no longer serving a purpose. Although removing someone from your list of connections may feel uncomfortable, remember that a network is only useful insofar as the members within it serve a purpose and do not detract from its functioning. Having a manageable number of connections may make social media and your involvement in it more effective.
- If you realize that you are not using an application any longer, consider deleting your account thereon. Dormant accounts cannot serve you any good and are best not kept.
- Always assume that others, from family members to future employers, are going to see your activities on social media. In the fuzzy world of Privacy 2.0, very little is sacred—and it may not be so tomorrow.

Always be on alert concerning the online reputation you're building with every click, comment and contribution.

6. Defend yourself.

Know how others are impacting your online reputation. The best defense against unflattering attention is not drawing it in the first place—in either the real or virtual worlds. Consider your actions in light of “Am I okay with others seeing this? Would I be proud if someone (my mother, my partner, my employer, etc.) saw this on the front page of the newspaper?” If the answer is no, consider not engaging in it in order to mediate reputational damage. Or, if you do, limit others' ability to publish and broadcast evidence thereof. If proof of your less-than-optimal self makes it to the web, try to disassociate it from your reputation by removing identifying information (e.g. un-tagging yourself) and/or requesting the poster remove it from the internet. Some things should remain private, and, hopefully, others will respect that fact. A less common concern may be your name. If you have a common name, consider building your profiles with a more uniquely identifying name, which you can then use as your default in communications, applications, etc. Simply adding your middle name, or even your middle initial, to an otherwise common name will help you stand out from others of similar moniker.

Considerations In a Job Search 2.0 World

Words of wisdom before you start your search:

Adler and Kwon (2002) stated that the positive effects of social networks come from the information, influence, and solidarity they generate.

van Hoyer, van Hooft, & Lievens (2009) warn that "...the effectiveness of job search behaviours might be determined more by the quality with which they are performed than by their intensity" (p.675).

1. Stay atop your profession.

Whether you build personal profiles and contribute to social media or not, during the job search every seeker should leverage the rich Library and Information Science culture social media makes readily available on the internet. Closely watch others' social media work: read blogs, follow tweets, watch walls. Learn as much as you possibly can via this medium, as it offers dynamic, up-to-date insight into current trends, challenges, opportunities and talk (not to mention language!) in the field. Far more immediate than works published in journals, social media reveals the day-to-day status of the field and those in it.

2. Consider upping the ante.

If you are ready to get involved in Job Search 2.0, consider increasing your involvement in social media. By putting your name out there now, and with greater frequency, you will draw attention to yourself, your knowledge, your skills, and your availability at a time when you need it most.

3. Express yourself...and your search.

Don't be afraid to express your job search online. That's what Job Search 2.0 is all about! Make sure that people in your networks know that you're a free agent and looking for employment. You never know who has information about job opportunities, and they'll never know you need it unless you share your search.

4. Get active. Get connected.

Proactively reach out to contacts of interest. One of the easiest ways to do so is to simply comment on something they have shared. Hopefully, they will respond and you'll develop a rapport. If nothing else, you'll be positioning yourself as recognizable and known with them and their connections.

5. Choose your words wisely.

Beyond keeping expletives out of your online comments, make sure that you are utilizing words strategically. Use words, descriptors, vocabulary and references to your advantage. Try to draw recruiters/employers attention on social media

applications just as you would in a cover letter: be concise, be thoughtful and know that every word counts.

6. Brand yourself.

If you are ambitious and comfortable in your skills, consider developing a personal brand to market yourself. Your work is a highly valuable commodity—make sure that others recognize that.

7. Invite others to be a part of the fun.

If you feel confident in your social media reputation, guide employers to it by adding addresses, links and names of your sites to resumes, e-mails and other correspondences. A prime place to include such information is under your signature line in your e-mail.

8. Don't get lost.

It may be easy to get lost in the world of Job Search 2.0, but it should be seen as only one part of a greater search strategy. Although the virtual world is becoming increasingly important to the job search, do not lose track of your place in the real world and how it too impacts your job search.

- a. *Establish a reputation.* Don't just sell yourself, sell your worth. Be tactful, not boastful. Be appreciative, not pushy. And always remember to help others as much as you want to be helped.
- b. *Respect the system.* As much as possible, approach job opportunities and important contacts via referrals. Just as cold-calling people in the real world often fails, so too does committing its virtual equivalent through social media. In general, remember that knowing someone on the inside is the surest way to get your resume considered.
- c. *You're not just an avatar.* Remember: you are a person, not just a profile. Don't forget to foster and nourish relationships in the real world. Shake hands. Be sincere. Prepare for interviews, not just by trawling the net and learning about the institution and its community, but by earnestly examining and evaluating your own experiences and knowing how to respond to questions. Be ready to calm the nerves of a face-to-face sit-down. And always make sure to follow up after an interview, with requested references, further information and gratitude for their time and attention.
- d. *Be active on all fronts.* Don't forget about other realms of professional activity. As much as possible, speak at events, publish to paper, stay active in face-to-face networks, remain vital at your places of education and work, contribute to professional groups and attend conferences. Face-time is still a vital part of belonging to the Library and Information Science profession—make sure yours is known.

9. Beware of possible scams.

Most people engaged in Job Search 2.0 are benevolent, or at worst selfish—but there are individuals out there who do not have your best interest in mind. Although few and far between, be on guard for these ne'er-do-wells and protect your search, your reputation, and your information.

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